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Morman wants new EPA head Pruitt to put waste pits on "TOP TEN" priority list

By Gilbert Hoffman • Aug 03, 2017

HARRIS COUNTY – Pct. 2 Commissioner Jack Morman waded into the battle to remove the toxic waste pits from the San Jacinto River, with a two page letter to the new EPA Administrator last Friday, asking for an expedited removal of the material.



Pct. 2 Commissioner Jack Morman

In his letter, Morman states that "As long as the dioxin pits remain in place, they create an ongoing hazard that will leach into the River and Galveston Bay. The site poses a serious threat to the health of our residents and to the environment."

Morman referenced a new study that Pruitt commissioned, a Task Force that has made recommendations for expedited solutions to the nation's 1330 Superfund sites. Pruitt has said that he will create a "TOP TEN" list of sites with priority to be cleaned up and reused. The list will contain sites that have been on the NPS (National Priority List) for over 5 years. Morman requested that the San Jacinto River Waste Pits be placed on that list.

Further, he said "Removal is the only remedy that resolves the contamination in the San Jacinto River Waste Pits with finality, eliminating the future costs and potential harm associated with leaving the waste in place."

The EPA Dallas office is currently reviewing comments and technical reports, before issuing a final ROC (Record Of Decision). They plan to have this ready by the end of 2017, unless Pruitt moves to shorten the schedule.

In the Task Force report, Pruitt is quoted as saying he has a "passion to clean up the country's worst pollution, as expeditiously and as thoroughly as possible."

The report lists five goals for the EPA Superfund clean-up:

- Expediting Cleanup and Remediation
- Re-Invigorating Responsible Party Cleanup and Reuse
- Encouraging Private Investment
- Promoting Redevelopment and Community Revitalization
- Engaging Partners and Stakeholders.

Morman's letter was widely distributed, going to the EPA, Texas Senators John Cornyn and Ted Cruz, U.S. Representatives Brian Babin, Gene Green, Randy Weber, and Ted Poe. Also EPA Regional Administrator Sam Coleman, and Harris County Attorney Vince Ryan.

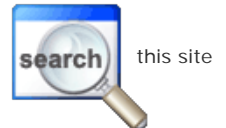
The San Jacinto River Coalition and THEA, under the leadership of Jackie Young, continue the fight to have the waste pits completely removed.

In the monthly meeting of these organizations, Young noted that the organization known as Keep-It-Capped, or San Jacinto Citizens Against Pollution are continuing their efforts to have the EPA settle for a permanent cap over the toxic material, rather

This Week's Highlights

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SUPERFUND NEWS

Get the latest on the San Jacinto Waste Pits

than complete removal.

She revealed that she has been served with a subpoena from their attorneys, requiring her to testify in what is known as "discovery," and to furnish certain documents from her activities.

As a result, THEA is now in a fund raising mode to afford to continue the fight to clean-up the river.

Young also revealed that a Tweet from Pruitt revealed that he had met recently with the CEO of International Paper. Since this company is one of the PRP (Potential Responsible Parties) for the San Jacinto River Waste Pits, she questioned the propriety of the meeting.

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